

Dr. David Lehman Sees a “Paradigm Shift” with EMA Otolaryngology™



Dr. David Lehman, a general otolaryngologist and partner at the Palm Beach Ear, Nose, and Throat Association, isn't a newcomer to electronic medical record (EMR) systems. "Most EMR systems are built with the generalist in mind, not the specialist," said Dr. Lehman. "In my view, that's like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. It's taking a very broad program that can be applied to every specialty, and then trying to retrofit a specialty into it. But every specialty has its own intricacies, its own special needs. A general EMR system really can't address them."

Key Benefits:

- Specialty-specific EMR system for otolaryngologists
- Faster, streamlined note-taking
- Generates accurate coding and billing
- Eliminates cloning
- Improves patient experience
- Cost-effective, cloud-based convenience

Designed for ENT Doctors

Frustrated with the available EMR systems on the market, Dr. Lehman knew there had to be a better solution, one with deep domain knowledge and unique functionality just for ENT doctors. “I became involved with EMA Otolaryngology™ and saw that it was a huge paradigm shift,” said Dr. Lehman. “EMA Otolaryngology was designed specifically for the otolaryngologist, created from the ground up to consider only what that specialty needed. It has otolaryngology-specific medical knowledge and diagnoses built directly into it. As a result, I can move through an exam faster and my notes in EMA are much more detailed and accurate.”

Documentation Made for Otolaryngology

EMR systems commonly rely on templates that don't provide the detail or breadth of information needed to document an exam effectively. “Having used other systems, I was never satisfied with templates, as they weren't tailored to the specific medical conditions I treat as an ENT doctor. I tried to write my own templates

for a while, but the language didn't flow and they were cumbersome to generate. A few years ago, I finally stopped using a template and free typed instead. My patients used to comment that I was a fast typist, and I knew I had to be just to capture all of the information.”

Switching to EMA freed Dr. Lehman from typing and made capturing all of the exam information easy, especially using the touch-and-swipe feature on an iPad interface. “EMA has streamlined my note-taking tremendously,” said Dr. Lehman. “The exam set is tailor-made for me as an otolaryngologist. I'm not trying to fit general findings into an ENT exam. The ENT exam is already laid out for me. It describes the findings as I think of them as a head and neck surgeon. That really carries across all aspects of EMA. The plans are customized for each individual diagnosis, and designed in a way that ENT doctors think of that diagnosis.”

An Operative Note in 10 Seconds

Not only did EMA eliminate the need for extensive typing so that he could focus more on his patients, it enabled faster creation of notes. “One of the biggest timesavers for me has been the ease-of-use of the procedure notes,” said Dr. Lehman. “In my old EMR system, there was no way to easily generate procedure notes. Even though I might have done 20-25 scopes per day, I still had to type the same note over and over. I could cut and paste from one to another, but I'd run the risk of cloning notes and having inaccurate

information. I didn't want to do that, so I typed out each note individually. It got even more difficult when I looked at more complex procedures with multiple steps. With EMA, I can generate an operative note, including every step I've done, in about 10 seconds. I see 30-40 patients per day, so it's a huge time-savings."

Prior to EMA, Dr. Lehman had to lug a laptop around from room to room and use it to document during the patient visits. That slowed down his exams and was a barrier to patient interaction. "I'm so glad that I don't have to do that anymore," Dr. Lehman said. "With EMA, I document on an iPad. Because the device is so small, I'm able to maintain eye contact with my patients during the exam, which gives them a better experience. My patients are really impressed when they see me documenting on an iPad. They feel that the iPad is state-of-the-art technology and figure that I must be on the cutting edge with medicine too."

Coding More Accurately and Confidently

"EMA's coding accuracy is a big positive," said Dr. Lehman. "Before EMA, I was less confident in my coding, so I coded everything a level three because it was safe. I just didn't feel that I had the documentation to support a higher level of coding. EMA automatically codes for the procedures I do. Now I don't have to hesitate when billing the level fours that I deserve, since the documentation is there to support it. I don't even want to calculate how much revenue and time I lost over the years by using another EMR system."

Cloud-based for Greater Convenience and Savings

Dr. Lehman laments about the downside of an on-site system. The hardware and tech support needed to manage

the servers for an older, client-server-based EMR system can result in slow data transfer, overloaded servers and staff needed to troubleshoot issues or maintain the system. "Moving to the cloud just makes good business sense," said Dr. Lehman. "A doctor can access patient information wherever and whenever he needs it. Plus, if you need a dedicated staff member to maintain the system, that's not a revenue-generating position. It takes away from the bottom line."

With EMA, physicians don't have to worry about aging servers, updating software or figuring out how to support them. "The fact that EMA is cloud-based is a big benefit and can free a practice from in-house technology headaches and added costs," Dr. Lehman said.

A Simple Solution to ICD-10

ICD-10 is coming in 2015, and Dr. Lehman takes comfort in knowing that EMA should help him to ease the transition. ICD-10 will mean an increase from 13,000 to approximately 140,000 codes. "If a provider selects the wrong code, they'll be denied payment," Dr. Lehman said. "EMA assigns the correct ICD-9 code to the specific diagnosis, which is really reassuring, and I expect EMA to do the same with ICD-10. I know other providers who are still documenting with paper charts and legacy EMR systems. I feel strongly that they won't be prepared for the changes to come with ICD-10 and other requirements down the road.

I think the biggest obstacle that holds doctors back from moving to better systems is simply the fear of change. I'm thankful to have EMA. It's the system I wished I had for seven years. I see where the future has to be, and EMA is it."

Note: Dr. David Lehman is Medical Director for EMA Otolaryngology.